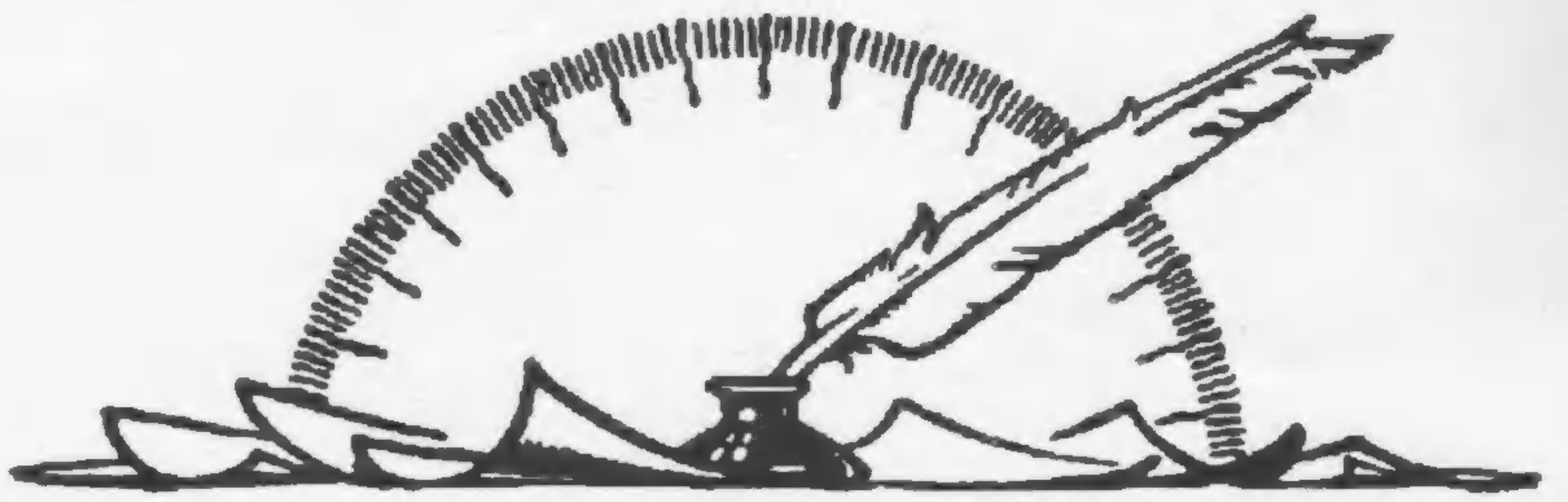


# POINT OF



Vol. I No. 1 ♦♦

Friday, May 17, 1991

♦♦ Austin, Texas



## FEATURE STORY by Fred Schmidt

A change was recently announced in the schedule of Friday "Happy Hours". Rather than being held weekly, employees will now gather twice monthly, on the first and third Friday, at the usual time of 4:30 p.m.

Under the new Happy Hour schedule, the first-Friday-of-the-month meetings will celebrate all of the employees birthdays for that month, as well as impart general news and information from people attending. The third-Friday will be used for department-specific announcements, introductions of new employees, and other commentary.

The reason for this change is two-fold: First, many individuals have expressed a desire to keep Happy Hours "purposeful" and substantive (rather than just a "social" visitation) by using this opportunity to share information of things going on throughout the company. It is felt that weekly gatherings are a little too frequent to fill with meaningful announcements, and that twice monthly is about the right pace.

Secondly, Happy Hours are simply one current component of many differing activities that Origin periodically undertakes in order to facilitate communication among employees in all areas of the company, and to make the company a more enjoyable place to work. All such activities are "dynamic" in nature, rather than hardwired, and thus are continually evaluated with respect to purpose, effectiveness, costs, etc., and are changed as needed.

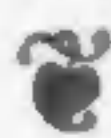
During recent years, some of these activities have been employee-initiated, and others were company initiated. We have had "event"-based gatherings like Wednesday luncheon cookouts, weekend volleyball games, sports team sponsorships, and theme parties at Richard's house. We've also had "benefit"-type activities like complimentary refreshments, birthday pies, snacks, etc.

The present lineup includes Monday morning coffee-and-donuts, the Happy Hours with complimentary food and beverages, and the ongoing avail-

ability throughout the day of company-paid coffee, tea, and hot chocolate. Now that the weather is getting nicer, we are again hoping to start up Wednesday cookouts, and weekend volleyball games or similar "family-wide" events on a monthly basis.

Dallas, Richard, and Michelle have primarily taken it upon themselves to plan and execute these ongoing activities. However, input and assistance from all fellow employees is both welcomed and essential to keeping these affairs fun and useful.

According to Dallas, the goal is to continually find fresh new ways to keep employees informed, motivated, and communicating with each other. In short, Origin wants to maintain a "company culture" that makes this a fun and productive place to work. There is an annual budget that governs how much the company can afford to spend on activities to achieve this. Dallas is considering the formation of an employee group to evaluate, plan, and implement the spending of these "fun funds"... to generate new ideas of things that we might do, and to help spread the load of carrying out group functions as the company grows. Anyone interested in participating in such a group, please contact Dallas.



## FIRESIDE CHAT

(News and notes from Robert Garriott)

Robert has been recently in Australia and Japan. "Down under", Robert has been meeting with distributors to establish relations and to determine who will become Origin's main outlet in Australia. In Japan, Robert has been meeting with Fujisankei and other companies, discussing our continuing licensing arrangements and new opportunities in the Japanese market.



## AT YOUR SERVICE

(News from the Customer Service Department)

As always, CS has been very busy. Origin receives about 60 letters daily, which are answered by our Customer Reps. Also, the CS staff is preparing to attend a series of seminars on PC operations and support.

Donna Whitaker now heads up the newly created Returns Department within CS. Her duties are to manage the returns & disk exchanges from our customers and see that their requests are handled quickly.

Direct sales has grown very fast, and now has a staff of two full time workers. Kathy Dorsett, formerly our Receptionist, has become the Direct Sales Administrator. Wing Commander Secret Missions 1 & 2 are the strongest direct sellers.

Have you seen the Wall of Fame? If not, head upstairs to the back hallway near CS and read some very entertaining letters from our customers, including the (in)famous Donald Glinkie.

CS also wishes to thank all of the QA & other PD staff who have provided so much help & hints over the last year.

Last but not least, Wayne Baker has prepared an interesting and very informative article that describes the joys and pitfalls of working in Customer Service. We'll try to print excerpts from time to time in future issues, or you can ask Wayne or Kay for a complete copy. Everyone at Origin should be sensitive to the job of CS...they are our direct communications lifeline to our valued end-users!



## RANDOM BITS

(Rumors and questions from Origin employees)

*Continued on next page...*



### Random Bits Continued from pg. 1

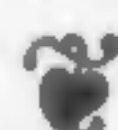
This section is here for many reasons. First, most people seem to enjoy gossip, so this seems like a good place to cover some. Second, we want to provide a forum for ANONYMOUS concerns or questions to be brought to the attention of others in the company. If you've heard a juicy rumor or have a question that you'd like to see answered that is, well, not something you'd shout out at happy hour, please leave any anonymous note in any POINT OF ORIGIN drop box. We'll press whomever is appropriate about the details and report findings here. Please make sure your questions are of a "general" nature — of interest to all or many employees in the company, rather than purely personal which you should take up with your own supervisor or manager.

*Here's what we've heard (You decide if it's true!)*

\*\* If Martian Dreams doesn't ship according to schedule, Warren Spector will lose a bet and have to shave his beard!

\*\* Supposedly, there is a hidden command in Wing Commander that allows you to give the "Thumb's Up!" after a kill (or "Shoot the Bird" at a fleeing foe!)

\*\* Origin has secretly invested \$1,000,000 on the establishment of a motion picture facility in Houston, where Wing Commander: The Motion Picture will be filmed. Talks are underway with Charlie Sheen to play the role of Lt. Arturo Blair (a.k.a. OurHero Bluehair).



## From the Field



### FROM THE FIELD

(News from the Sales Department)

Fred and Martin were recently in Europe attending the European Computer Trade Show to claim more awards (see the Marketplace) and to begin work on Origin's push to increase our European market share. Watch for the feature story on our International market in the next issue of POINT OF ORIGIN.

During the week of April 29th, Karl will be in Las Vegas showing off our products to store managers of the huge Intelligent Electronics/Entre Computer Systems chain; Anita will travel to Atlantic City for the Spring conference of Electronic Boutique's store managers.

Back home, sales are soaring. Origin has recently brought Mericel (formerly Softsel) on board; this is the 2nd largest software distributor in the U.S. Soon, you can look for the Wing Commander series in SAM'S stores across the nation. Origin is also talking with a new book distributor, which could help with the dramatic increase in cluebook sales (see IN THE PIPELINE).



## Person to Person

### PERSON TO PERSON

(Stories about Origin people off-the-clock)

### LEND ME YOUR EARS, MY LORDS AND LADIES, AND I SHALL TELL YOU OF THE KNIGHTS OF BRITANNIA!

Over the years, the Knights of Britannia was discussed in various forms: fan clubs, marketing promotions, etc. It finally got off the ground, at least in one form, when the Sales & Marketing departments wanted to thank people who were significant contributors to the overall computer entertainment industry. At the time, the K.O.B. was an "award" that Origin could bestow upon an individual as recognition. Therefore, plaques were created for the first inductees as Honorary Knights of Britannia.

After this initial effort, Lord British (aka Richard Garriott) decided to expand and create an order for anyone who desired for the fun and glory of it all, to become not just an honorary Knight, but an actual, fully appointed Knight of Britannia.

Becoming a fully appointed Knight (hereafter referred to as Quest Knight) is not an easy task. There are a series of steps that must be undertaken and achieved to earn this title.

First, the interested party must make an application to the Principal of the Order, which at printing is our benevolent sovereign, Lord British. Next, if accepted, the applicant will be granted a quest. These quests will pertain to Britannia or Ultima, and are matched to challenge the talents of the individual. For example, the quest for Lady Sir Penumbra (Amanda Dee, the first Quest Knight) was to create stuffed animals for all of the creatures in the story "Hubert the Lion" which was featured in Ultima VI. Once the questor has completed their task to the satisfaction of Lord British, they are eligible to be inducted as a Quest Knight in a ceremony at the quarterly meeting of the Knights of Britannia. Their names will also be placed on a permanent roster listing the names of all the Knights of Britannia.

Not all who inquire will be able to become a Quest Knight, but fear not. There will still be Honorary Knights of Britannia, and a second category of "Knights" who have given service to the realm, but not undergone the questing procedure. Who knows where/how this noble order might yet evolve in future years!



## COVERT OPS.



### COVERT OPS

(Notes from the Operations Department)

For those working late at Origin, the night bell has been reinstated. To contact an employee working after hours, call 328-5491 and our automated call forwarding service will answer. Dial the extension number of the person and their phone will ring. If you don't know the extension, the call 328-5819 to ring the night bell. The ringers are located upstairs near the Quality Assurance office, and downstairs at the T-intersection near the copier. More bells will be added soon. To pick up the night line, pick up the phone and dial \*7676 (don't forget the "star" button in front). This will answer the phone and then you can transfer the call as needed.



## In the Pipeline

### IN THE PIPELINE

(Notes from Product Development)

The hiring in Product Development is finally slowing. There are still 2 artist positions to fill, and 1 programmer position. See Denis or Dallas for details.

Work on Martian Dreams is still heavy as we approach the end of beta testing and targeting a mid-May release date. Wing Commander II is still on track for release this summer. Work is piling up on Ultima VII: The Black Gate, and "Air Command", both due to be released for Christmas. Also, Ultima VI: The False Prophet for the FM Towns computer is well underway. If your haven't heard (literally), this CD-ROM based product will feature digitized speech for every character in the game. It will be sold initially in Japan.

Origin is in the process of solidifying a new book creation and distribution relationship with Prima Publishing of Sacramento, CA. Prima is associated with St. Marten's Press nationally. The deal calls for Prima to create an ongoing series of officially licensed books on Origin products that will be sold under the Origin/Prima imprint. Origin's sales department will handle all sales of the new titles into software retail channels in the USA and Canada, while St. Marten's press will cover traditional bookstores/chains. The first two titles in the series, planned for release this Fall are: 1) A complete guide to Wing Commander, covering WC1, SM1, SM2, and WC2. Included will be hints, tips, clues and lots of "making of" background info on the team and process. Mike



Harrison (who has worked with Origin in the past on contract marketing projects) is the writer and will be visiting Austin soon to pull the pieces together. 2) A second book, *Ultima: The Avatar Adventures*, will span *Ultima's* IV, V, and VI in a single narrative story that will provide all the necessary clues and solutions to those three titles. It will attempt to include both computer and NES versions, possibly *Ultima/ Gameboy* as well, and finish with a sneak preview and hints to *Ultima VII*. An Austin-area writer is still being sought.

Origin will soon undertake French and German translations of *Wing Commander I*, both *Secret Missions*, *Wing Commander II*, and *Martian Dreams* for the European market. It's going to be a very busy summer... all are to be ready for this Christmas!

*Wing Commander* for the Genesis, licensed directly to SEGA, is under development out of house. No details yet as to a projected release date. A deal is also expected to be announced soon for *Wing Commander* on the new 16-bit Nintendo SFX game console launching this Christmas.

Our friends at Trinity University who have been diligently working on a translation of *Ultima VI: The False Prophet* for the Macintosh were just in town to show their work and talk with Richard on Friday, May 3rd. (Note: This project has not, at this time, been given a official "scheduled for release" status, so don't tell outsiders about it, please!)



#### THE MARKETPLACE

(News from the Marketing Department)

Summer CES in Chicago is on June 1st - 4th. Origin is once again preparing to steal the show by premiering our latest software. The titles to be shown include *Ultima VII: The Black Gate*, *Strike Commander*, *Wing Commander II*, and *Martian Dreams*.

We may also be showing some of *Ultima VI* for FM-Towns/CD and *Ultima: The Underworld*, the new 3-D dungeon game being developed by Paul Neurath and Blue Sky Productions.

Unlike previous presentations, however, Origin will provide a new cinematic experience — literally — by demonstrating our products not only on the show floor, but in an actual 350 seat movie theater! The games will be projected using a special computer/projector and will use the full theater stereo sound system. This special V.I.P. presentation will be shown to all top buyers from major retailers and distributors, members of the press, and for good measure, even a few of our competitors. We're also making this a World Premier by inviting key buyers

and journalists from Europe, Japan, and Australia who will be attending the CES show.

Origin continues to earn award after award from the industry. The latest come from the European Computer Trade Show in London, where *Ultima VI* won the Best Packaging Award, and *Wing Commander* won the Best Entertainment (MS-DOS) Award.

## Recent Arrivals

#### RECENT ARRIVALS

(Welcome to new Origin personnel)

Sherry Cain is our new Development Services Manager, and she comes to us with an impressive background of 12 years at Texas Instruments.

The position of Production Coordinator has been filled by Curtis Wood.

Our newest CSR helping with the load in Customer service is Michael Rundell.

Marie Lockhart has signed on as the new Receptionist.

David Ladyman has been named as the Publications Editor, and will handle the editing and publication coordination of OSI cluebooks, *Quest for Clues*, and OSI-licensed book publishing groups.

Pat Price Monroe joins Origin as the Director of Marketing. Her background is has been with the health industry, IBM, and Execucum.

Please join us in welcoming our new employees aboard!

## WANT ADS

#### WANT ADS / LOST & FOUND

(Personal requests & notices from Origin employees)

Raymond Benson invites everyone to join the James Bond 007 Fan Club. This is the British-based club, not the American one. The Club is excellent, with a full-color glossy magazine (for which Raymond writes a continuing column.) See Raymond Benson for details.

Anyone with information concerning a missing camera tripod that belongs to Jackie Chapman should contact her immediately.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE